

Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
www.planning.ri.gov



Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of Transportation Improvement Plan Amendments.
- posting of technical paper 155 Highway Functional Classification 2005-2015
- Posting of public hearing notices
- electronic filing of committee agenda's and minutes with the secretary of state's office.
- posting of the Forest Resources Management Plan
- posting of city and town amendments to their comprehensive plans and affordable housing plans.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Rivers Council, Growth Planning Council, and Transportation Advisory Committee's Calendar and Agendas.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, kimgo@lori.state.ri.us

STAFF NEWS

Linda Resendes, Word Processing Typist, celebrated 25 years with state government.

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

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January—March 2005
Number 414

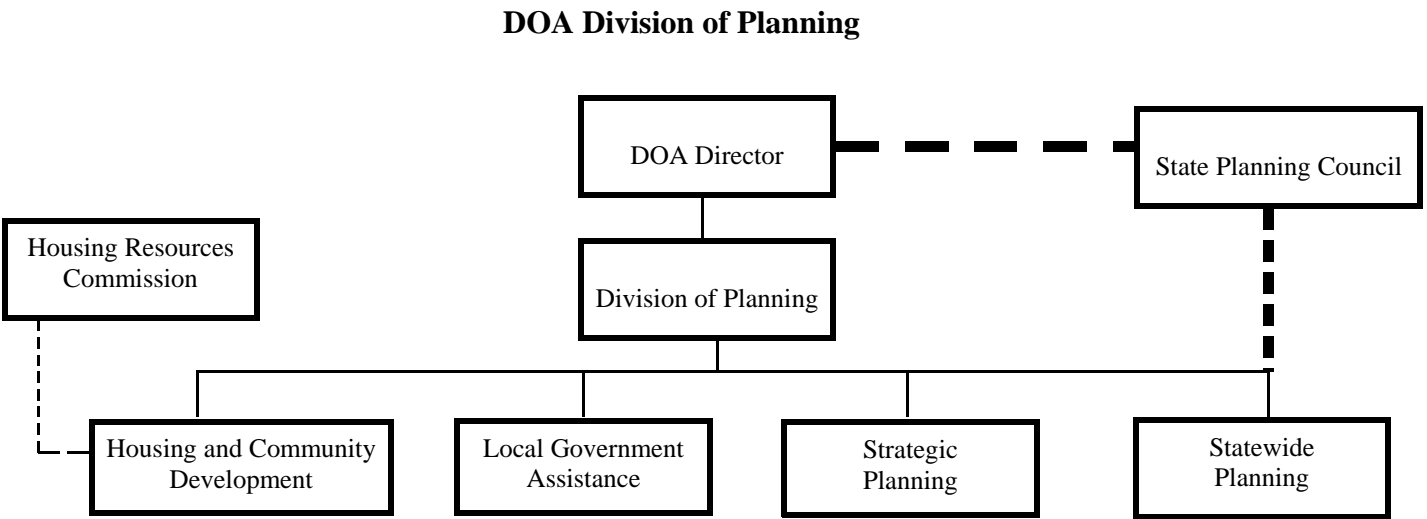
Quarterly Progress Report

PLANNING TO RETURN TO DIVISION STATUS

On February 1, Governor Carcieri announced “to strengthen Planning in state government and to keep us ahead of the curve on issues such as housing, energy, land use and transportation, I am elevating Planning to a Division status within the Department of Administration. This division will include the Offices of Statewide and Strategic Planning, and the new Office of Housing and Community Development.”

Statewide Planning will continue its traditional roles and functions including development of long-range policies and plans as set forth in the State Guide Plan and acting in the capacity of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning. The new Office of Housing and Community Development will staff the Housing Resources Commission and its programs as well as take responsibility for the state's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

The organizational framework of the new Division is depicted below.



Using Land Characteristics to Analyze
Potential Development Intensity and Future Conservation
Christina Delage, GIS Technician

Building is Easy; Building Wisely is Not. From the times of the earliest settlements we have altered the land to suit our needs. One notable example is the filling of wetlands as a method of converting problematic soils to useable agriculture. In retrospect we now understand the value of wetlands and have adopted regulations to protect them. Given sufficient funds and modern technology we are capable of altering the land to accept virtually any type of development we choose. For instance, bedrock can be blasted, new style individual sewage dispose systems (ISDS) have been invented that allows development in soil conditions previously considered undevelopable, sewers can be installed to allow dense development in areas where ISDS would be inadequate, and public water can be brought to areas where wells would be impractical or insufficient.

As a planning agency it is incumbent upon us to listen to the land, in order to determine what resource values should be preserved and what intensity of development the land is capable of supporting at minimal cost and investment in infrastructure. While the final decision on where and what to build lies in the hands of municipal officials and individual developers the results of this land use project is to identify areas most suitable for protection as well as areas best suited for a variety of development types, optimally in compact, dense patterns that reduces sprawl. The results will be incorporated into a unified statewide future land use dataset that will help guide communities to protect natural resources, local character, and promote community centers.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is the tool by which we can "listen" to the land. In the 16

years since Rhode Island Geographical Information Systems (RIGIS) was established over 100 datasets have been created. These datasets cover such topics as demographics, development patterns (residential density, commercial, industrial, etc), natural resources, transportation, utilities, and much more. What GIS allows us to do is to examine multiple datasets simultaneously to examine the characteristics of all the land and water within the state to analyze: 1) what is already developed, 2) what is already protected, and 3) analyze all the undeveloped and unprotected land to determine its suitability for development or value for conservation.

The future land use analysis is being completed in phases. To date the phases that have been completed include: 1) land suitability analysis based on certain key layers related to natural resources and limitations to development, 2) development and conservation intensity based on land suitability, sensitive water resources, and proximity to public water and sewer infrastructure, and 3) prioritizing future development based on development intensity categories, proximity to current or extended water and sewer infrastructure, proximity to highway interchanges, bus stops, rail stations and arterial highways.

Recently two of the future land use project maps have been accepted for inclusion in the Environmental Systems Research Institute's (ESRI) State Map Book, Volume 1. ESRI is widely known worldwide for their leading edge in GIS technology and analysis. The following page is a preliminary copy of the layout that will be published, including a more detailed description of the future land use project phases, analysis and preliminary draft maps.

Graphics Room—Aerial Photos

Inventory and preservation of aerial photographs, maps, mylars, drafting supplies and other related materials was initiated during this quarter. Significant progress has been made regarding this effort.

Graphic assistance was provided to the Atrium Gallery. Technical assistance was provided to other agencies within DOA.

50 aerial photographs were loaned to cities, towns, other state government agencies and the private sector.

Staff also assisted with inquires regarding photographic and digital aerals.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Section, acting as the state's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) staff, kicked off the 2005 project solicitation in March with a request for an indication of interest by prospective applicants. Those who answered in the affirmative were sent an application package, either electronically or through the mail. The deadline for proposals is 4 p.m., Friday, May 6.

Applications for this year's CEDS may still be requested. Eligible applicants include cities and towns (municipal governments), public agencies, institutions of higher learning, and non-profit development organizations. Contact information is on the Statewide Planning website under "Economic Development."

Staff from the Economic Development Section represent Statewide Planning on three important intergovernmental groups: the Ad Hoc Group of the Rhode Island Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team, the Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund (RIREF) Advisory Board, and the Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Buildings and Facilities Working Group. This quarter, the Coordination Team finalized its Scope of Work for the calendar year and submitted it to the General Assembly; the RIREF Board provided financing for several small-scale renewable energy projects and began developing a strategic plan to phase in more renewable energy; and the Buildings and Facilities Working Group looked for ways to expand demand-side management programs to natural gas and fuel oil, strengthen building code standards to implement better energy conservation, and raise appliance standards.

Review of EDC projects

- 3 proposals received this quarter
- 2 proposals pending
- 1 proposals completed
- 2 proposals acted on by staff and reviewing agencies

Intergovernmental Review

31 new proposals completed.



RI Census

In April 2005, information about how much Americans spend on health care, groceries, clothing, transportation, housing, and other items will be collected by the U.S. Census Bureau from a sample of randomly selected households across the country.

The Consumer Expenditure (CE) Survey program will actually consist of two surveys. A number of households will be interviewed once every three months to obtain data on relatively large expenditures. Over the course of a year, another selected number of households will keep two consecutive one-week diaries of all purchases. The CE Interview survey is designed to capture

expenditure data that respondents can reasonably recall for a period of three months or longer, whereas the CE Diary Survey captures expenditures on small, frequently purchased items that are normally difficult for respondents to recall later.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics will incorporate the data in updating the Consumer Price Index, the single most widely used measure of inflation in the country. Findings from the survey will also permit policy-makers to assess the impact of changes in governmental policies on the spending patterns of different socio-economic groups, and will help businesses track consumer spending trends so they can better respond to the needs of the American consumer.

Comprehensive Plans

The State review of local affordable housing plans continued to highlight the accomplishments of the Comprehensive Plans Section during the first quarter of 2005.

Twenty-seven affordable housing plans (AHPs) were reviewed by the appropriate State agencies. Together with their consultants, meetings were held with local officials from 26 municipalities to discuss the reviews. The Director of Administration sent out formal Letters of Deficiency to all 27 towns.

Nine communities submitted revisions as requested in the State review. Of these revisions, one was determined to be ready for final approval pending the State's receipt of a complete copy of the AHP as approved; six were determined to be in need of further revision; and two are still in the process of State review.

State approval was granted for the Five-Year Update of the Town of Burrillville Comprehensive Plan as well as amendment CHA 04-3, the "US Route 1 Scenic Highway Stewardship Plan", to the Town of Charlestown Comprehensive Plan.

Two amendments to the Town of North Kingstown Comprehensive Plan were accepted for State review. NK 04-1 institutes a "Planned Village District", and NK 04-2 incorporates the Quonset Davisville Port and Commerce Park Master Plan".

Revisions to the Town of Foster Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Update were also accepted for State review.

Meetings with the new Town Planner from West Warwick have resulted in the imminent approval of the Town's initial Comprehensive Plan as revised.

Expiration letters were sent to the Cities of Central Falls and Cranston with respect to the State approval of their Comprehensive Plans.

Participation with GrowSmart Rhode Island has continued on developing a training program for local government officials whose affordable housing plans call for the utilization of inclusionary zoning.

At the invitation of the "Special House Commission to Study RI Airport Corporation's Management and Governance of RI's Airports", testimony was offered regarding the procedural coordination of local comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and RIAC's power of eminent domain.

Staff attended and manned an information booth at the 5th Annual Convention of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns entitled "Local Officials Creating Stronger Communities".

Welcomed Jennifer Blaine, an intern from St Mary Bay View High School. Jennifer has been compiling information from selected communities in the process of expanding their public sewer and/or water service areas.

Committee Actions

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in January, February and March. They received a briefing on the update of the State Land Use Policies and Plan as well as an overview of the Strategic Plan for the Rhode Island Geographic Information System. The Council adopted the update to the Forest Resources Management Plan as element 161 of the State Guide Plan. The Council also amended the project priority list of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by including a project to extend water service to an economic development site in East Greenwich. The CEDS project selection scoring criteria for the upcoming annual solicitation were amended. The Council also approved an amendment to the transit program of the Transportation Improvement Program.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met in January, February and March. Acting in the capacity as the Council's advisory committee on the update of the land use element, the Committee received in depth briefings on the content of the draft plan with particular attention to the future land use scenario development using GIS technology and the strategies for future land use. The Committee also took action on the update of the Forest Resources Management Plan as well as an amendment to the CEDS and the CEDS scoring criteria for his year's project solicitation. The Committee was briefed by staff of the Water Resources Board on the water allocation planning process.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee met in January and March and took the following actions:

- Conducted a public hearing on TIP Amendment #12 regarding the Transit Program, and recommended approval to the State Planning Council.
- Conducted a public hearing on TIP Amendment #13 regarding the Highway Program, and recommended approval to the State Planning Council.
- Conducted a public hearing on the federal Recertification of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (State Planning Council and Statewide Planning Program).
- Accepted TIP status reports from RI Department of Transportation and RI Public Transit Authority.

GROWTH PLANNING COUNCIL

The Governor's Growth Planning Council is charged by Executive Order with examining the impacts of the state's current development patterns, evaluating the effect of state programs on sustainable development, recommending means to encourage sustainable development and fostering partnerships to build local capacity to manage growth. Statewide Planning is providing staff support to the Council.

The Council met in January to discuss linking the growth centers concept with the Jump Start program proposed by the Economic Development Corporation. Staff from the Governor's Office offered to develop insight as to the future of the Council.

Transportation

Highway Functional Classification published on website:

Technical Paper 155, Highway Functional Classification (2005-2015) has been published on the website. This new and improved format includes the Statewide Map, individual maps for each city and town, as well as a list of roadways, just a click away. The Functional Classification is generally updated every 10 years, and this format allows us to publish amendments.

Transportation Improvement Program

FY 2003-2005:

- Amendment #12 (Transit Program) was approved by the State Planning Council in February.
- The TAC held a public hearing in March for Amendment #13 (Highway Program).

FY 2006-2007:

A total of 132 TIP proposals were received on or before the February 4 deadline in response to the solicitation for projects.

- Cities and Towns: 104 (from 31 applicants)
- State Agencies: 13 (from 3 applicants)
- Other: 11 (from 6 applicants)

Additionally, in a separate but simultaneous call for projects, 112 Transportation Enhancement project proposals were received.

The TIP project proposals were presented at a series of public hearings around the state in late January and early February. The following subcommittees have been meeting to score and rank the proposals according to criteria approved by the State Planning Council:

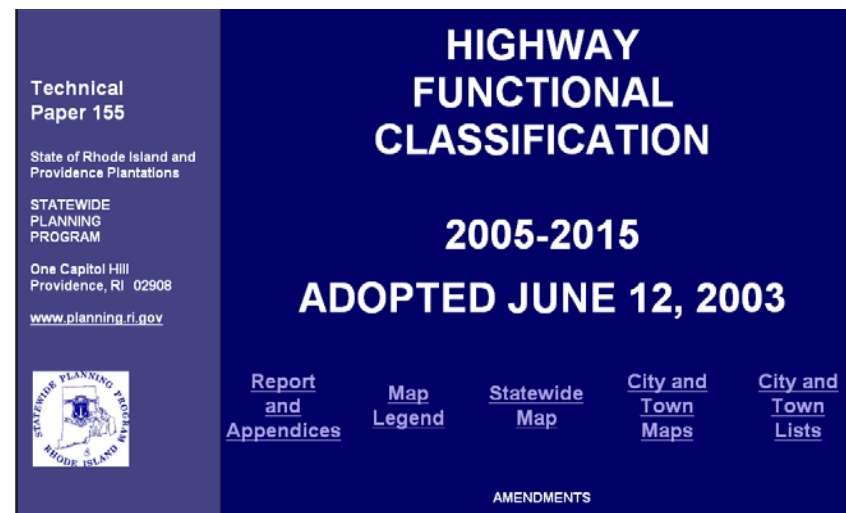
Subcommittees of the Transportation Advisory Committee:

- Metro Region
- Northwest Region
- South County Region
- East Bay Region
- Rail (statewide)
- Bicycle/Pedestrian (statewide)

Other subcommittees:

- Air Quality / Transportation Subcommittee
- Transportation Enhancement Advisory Committee

Upon completion of the scoring process and presentation of subcommittee reports to the Transportation Advisory Committee, a draft TIP for FY 2006-2007 will be developed and made available for public review. Please visit the Statewide Planning website in early June for the draft TIP and public hearing notice.



Land Use

Land Use Plan –Draft Objectives and Strategies

With advice from the Technical Committee, staff has developed a draft set of 25 objectives and 80 strategies to the new State Land Use Plan to guide statewide efforts towards goals in Greenspace, Community Design, Infrastructure and Implementation. The objectives and strategies have been prepared as a guide for general land use planning, and for development and conservation activities in Rhode Island. Most particularly, the objectives and strategies are intended as a guide to municipalities and state agencies as they continue to improve and coordinate their land use plans and regulations. A summary of draft Land Use Plan goals and objectives:

Build the Greenspace Network.

Objectives:

- Permanently protect critical natural resources
- Upgrade and maintain urban and community Greenspace
- Provide a diverse, well-designed system of public outdoor recreation facilities

Excellence in Community Design

Objectives:

- Focus growth in centers of different sizes and types
- Promote traditional neighborhoods, near centers
- Protect rural character
- Focus development of major employment centers

First Class Supporting Infrastructure

Objectives:

- Maintain fully functional public water and sewer systems
- Protect drinking water supply resources
- Mitigate significant negative environmental factors
- Map priority service expansion areas
- Promote intermodal centers
- Provide pedestrian connections through all centers and urban districts
- Maintain functional integrity of existing and planned roadways

Implement and Maintain the Vision

Objectives:

- Reform Rhode Island's property tax system
- Require excellent land use plans and coordinated regulations
- Develop and maintain excellent land use information and technology systems
- Ensure that state and municipal planning officials are well-trained and properly supported
- Update the state-enabling legislation for planning, as necessary to support state and municipal actions
- Achieve greater integration of state and municipal planning systems and support regional efforts

Rhode Island Forest Resources Management Plan – Final Approval

Management of Rhode Island's forestland resources is the focus of State Guide Plan 161, the new Rhode Island Forest Resources Management Plan, approved by the State Planning Council in March (replacing a 1984 plan). Statewide Planning coordinated with the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Division of Forest Environment with help from the DEM Office of Sustainable Watersheds to produce the new plan.

Among the plan's findings on existing forest conditions in Rhode Island:

- The USDA Forest Service reports 393,000 acres of forestland in R.I., almost 59% of the state, is covered with forest. Oak-Hickory forest is the predominant type, covering 212,000 acres
- The Farm, Forest and Open Space Program has seen a dramatic increase in enrollment with 3,600 properties enrolled statewide (28,614 acres in farmland and 29,345 as forest)
- Although R.I. forests are growing on land that was once cleared for agriculture, more than half of the forestland is over 60 years old.
- 59% of the state's forestland is owned by private individuals.

A total of 159,658 acres of R.I. forestland is permanently protected. Public agencies and non-profit organizations own 80,800 acres; private organizations, water suppliers, municipalities and land trusts have preserved another 77,400; and the USDA Forest Service has acquired development rights to 1,458 acres.